

# Greek Vase Painting



The Metropolitan Museum of Art



# Greek Vase Painting

DIETRICH VON BOTHMER

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This publication appeared originally as  
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*  
for Fall 1972. It has been revised and  
expanded by the author.

Copyright © 1972, 1987 by  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Third printing, 1994

Published by  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
John P. O'Neill, Editor in Chief  
Joan Holt, Editor  
Michael Harvey, Designer  
Photography by Walter J. F. Yee,  
Chief Photographer of The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art Photograph Studio,  
and by former Chief Photographers  
William F. Pons, Thomas McAdams,  
and Edward J. Milla

On the covers: Scene from the Death of  
Sarpedon and details of the calyx krater  
signed by the painter Euphronios  
(Figure 19)

Library of Congress  
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

von Bothmer, Dietrich, 1918-  
Greek vase painting.

Includes index.

1. Vases, Greek – Catalogs. 2. Vase-  
painting, Greek – Catalogs. 3. Vases –  
New York (N. Y.) – Catalogs. 4. Metropol-  
itan Museum of Art (New York, N. Y.) –  
Catalogs. I. Metropolitan Museum of Art  
(New York, N. Y.) II. Title.  
NK4623.N55M478 1987  
738.3'82'093807401741 87-5507  
ISBN 0-87099-488-3



# Introduction

A masterpiece of potting and painting: this is the Attic red-figured calyx krater that the Metropolitan Museum acquired on September 12, 1972. Made about 515 B.C., it is signed by the painter Euphronios and by the potter Euxitheos. Surpassing in beauty and excellence any vase in the Museum's large collection, it ranks in importance with the acknowledged masterpieces of Greek art. In the field of painted Greek pottery, it may without exaggeration be considered the finest Greek vase there is. The illustrations on the cover and later in this article (Figure 19) demonstrate clearly and immediately why the krater has become the keystone of the Museum's collection of Greek vases. Through its purchase our holdings in this fascinating field took on a new significance: an important collection rose to one of distinction. Conversely, this vase would lose some of its meaning if it could not be seen and studied in the proper context.

A work of art whose impact is so direct may kindle interest in a field that is appreciated by only a few. What distinguishes Greek vases from all other decorated pottery is that their decoration, both in content and technique, rises above the level of ornamentation and justifies the special term vase painting.

Painted Greek vases are known from the second millennium B.C. until almost the end of the first century B.C., and pottery was produced from one end of the Greek world to the other. In the beginning many local styles flourished, but by the middle of the sixth century B.C. the vases of Attica and her capital Athens had exceeded in quantity and quality those of their nearest rival Corinth, with whom they had been competing for the lucrative foreign markets. This Attic supremacy – never surpassed – lasted for a century and a half and survived many wars and political upheavals, until the disastrous end of the Peloponnesian war in 404 B.C. robbed Athens of her profitable markets in the West. After that Attic pottery went into a slow but steady decline, and no vases of any note were painted after the middle of the fourth century B.C., though, as we shall see, vase painting continued in other parts of the Greek world.

The earliest Greek vases are painted primarily with simple ornamental designs and in shape and decoration hardly differ from pottery produced in other parts of the world. To be sure, some attempts at telling a story already appear in Mycenaean vases of the late Bronze Age, although pure ornament is still the prevailing element, and vases with human subjects are a distinct minority. The chief attraction of Mycenaean ceramic decoration is the exuberant designs taken from sea life, but by the very end of the second millennium a complete aesthetic reversal sets in. The succeeding style is known as “geometric” and, as the name implies, the strict, orderly patterns are drawn with either a compass or a ruler. When human

*The picture at the bottom of this page is taken from the neck of a loutrophoros; it shows a woman carrying a loutrophoros amphora, surrounded by other women who raise their hands in grief. Loutrophoroi are vases in which the water for the bridal bath was fetched; the same shape, however, was also employed for vases put into the tomb. In the fourth century, a wedding vase carved in stone becomes, by transferred symbolism, the grave marker of those who died unmarried.*

*At the top of the opposite page, three women are depicted at a fountain house with hydriai (water jars). One has placed the empty jar sideways on her head; another holds it by the back handle.*

*The scenes at the middle and bottom show a woman pouring wine from an oinochoe (wine jug) into a phiale (libation bowl) held by Athena, and into a kylix (wine cup) held by a youth.*



figures reappear, in the eighth century B.C., they are still subordinated to an overall design that is chiefly abstract. Yet these early figural compositions already evidence discipline and force, and the extreme economy of line and contour suggests a deliberate attempt to depict only essentials. It is with the geometric figure style that Attic vases show their superiority for the first time.

The next phase of vase painting coincides with what is called the orientalizing period of Greek art: contact with the Near East opened Greek eyes to the Orient with its long tradition of floral ornaments, exotic beasts, and weird monsters. Much of the geometric austerity is abandoned, as incredible plants luxuriate in ornamental bands or even become part of the principal scene. In the drawing of the human figure, the strict silhouette of the geometric age now gives way to outline drawings that look curiously unsubstantial, since most of the available background is still filled with all manner of patterns. It is during this orientalizing period, however, that a decisive innovation was made in Corinth: the establishment of the black-figure technique. This meant a return to black-glaze silhouettes, but now enlivened and articulated with incised lines and the addition of two matte ceramic colors, red and white. In the second half of the seventh century this technique spread to Athens, where, from the very beginning, the skill demanded by the engraved lines encouraged artists to develop personal styles. It is, therefore, from the late seventh century on that style becomes the property of the artist instead of being merely a general fashion. Not surprisingly, signatures now begin to occur, and even unsigned vases can be attributed to individual painters with some assurance of accuracy. Although ornamental friezes still appear, the emphasis on human figures becomes the overriding principle that is to govern vase painting for more than two centuries.

Most of the scenes on geometric works that portray human figures occur on vases used as grave monuments, and they depict subjects related to the burial: the lying in state with mourners, or funeral processions (Figure 1), to give two examples. But slowly other subjects are introduced that seem to be taken from the rich world of mythology. To watch the development of the narrative is one of the most rewarding studies of Greek vase painting. The tales recounted are known to us from Greek literature, especially the early epics, but the artists appear to have been quite selective in what they show and how they tell a story. At no time do vases furnish book illustrations in the modern sense, with a picture for each episode. In this development of a narrative style, certain iconographic traditions are adhered to, but, more and more, thanks to the creative spirit of the individual artists, the stories told and the scenes shown break with time-honored formulae and introduce fresh aspects, novel groupings, or even subjects not before depicted. The great masters of Attic black-figure—Sophilos, Kleitias, Nearchos, Lydos, the Amasis Painter, and Exekias (Figures 9, 10, 11, 12)—not only manage to incorporate every artistic advance into their drawing of figures and entire compositions, but they also succeed in endowing their scenes with something of a personal experience. The gaiety and exuberance of a revel are strongly differentiated from the grim scene on a battlefield, where the victors are easily distinguishable from the vanquished. Then there are solemn processions of worshipers, and grieving mourners at a bier. Among the heroes, Herakles becomes the favorite, perhaps because he was the most human. Yet he, too, is shown with subtle variations: the tense protagonist in strenuous labors differs from the relaxed hero who has been rewarded by immortality and Olympian status. This growing emphasis on human interpretations as opposed to hieratic formalism is one of the many accomplishments of the great black-figure painters.

The limitations of the black-figure technique, particularly the unrealistic color scheme, must have been resented by artists who strove for ever richer and more varied representations. About 530–525 B.C. a new technique is introduced, which is called red-figure. In this technique the figures are left the color of the clay (and



hence turn red when the vase is fired); details are indicated either in a very fine line drawn in black glaze, which is slightly raised (and hence called a relief line), or in lines of varying thickness executed in diluted glaze, with a tonal range from dark brown to translucent yellow. The dilute glaze is also at times applied to limited areas as a solid wash. The entire background – the space between and around the figures – is now painted a lustrous black, as if the system of illumination had been reversed. Most black-figure scenes look like sun-drenched open spaces in which figures are silhouetted, as if seen against the light. Red-figure, by contrast, anticipates the principles of modern theatrical lighting, with each performer bathed in his own spotlight. The immediate benefit for the spectator is twofold: not only does the picture carry better over a greater distance, but the contour of the vase itself is also less eroded by the decoration: the black of the background merges with the portions of the vase that bear no figures. Thus the contour of the vase and its rotundity are reestablished, with the proper stress on the profile or silhouette of the vase.

The path of black-figure from its powerful though unsophisticated beginnings in the late seventh century to its almost decadent daintiness a hundred years later is straight and clear. Red-figure in its initial phase seems brutally rustic by comparison, and its earliest practitioners, the Andokides Painter and Oltos (Figures 15, 18), can hardly have been a serious challenge to the masters of the older, fully developed technique. In early works by the Andokides Painter, for instance, the heavy inner markings, not even consistently drawn in relief lines, are no match for the subtle incisions of, say, the late Exekias.

All of this, however, changes rapidly and radically in the next generation, when a group of first-rate painters sets out to perfect the new technique. This group, considered the Pioneers, no longer translates black-figure scenes into red-figure, as the Andokides Painter had been prone to do; instead, the old subjects are treated in novel compositions, as if they had never been painted before, and new subjects are introduced with a surety as if they had a long tradition behind them. It is in this period, and within the circle of the Pioneers, that the individual styles of the painters can most readily be distinguished, and almost every one of their works is a masterpiece. By a happy coincidence (if indeed it is merely a coincidence), the greatest of the Pioneers are known to us by name. They are Euphronios, Euthymides, and Phintias. Each of the three goes his own way and can thus be recognized, even though not all their works bear a signature. Each, by himself, contributes a solid chapter to Attic vase painting, but it is clear that they looked at each other's work and learned from one another. Taken together, they bring about a *primavera* that painting did not see again until the Italian Renaissance.

Statistically speaking – and here we must make allowances for the fortuitous circumstances of the survival of their works – not one of them painted for very long or in great quantity, and just how they passed on the torch is not clear. At the height of their artistic activity, several new shapes begin to make their appearance, and the Pioneers seem to have collaborated with the potters in laying out the scheme of decoration on them; the specialized preferences for a small number of shapes that characterize later generations of vase painters are not yet apparent. Nor is there much, if any, repetition of subjects or, for that matter, any limitation: both the invisible world of the gods and the everyday life of Athens and her inhabitants are drawn with equal love, and the heroes of the past are shown with the features of the noblest contemporaries.

The next phase of Attic red-figure opens with the Berlin Painter and the Kleophrades Painter; all the technical achievements of the Pioneers are continued with ease and consistency, as if they had been taught for generations. What is new now, apart from relatively minor anatomical refinements, are novel decorative principles through which the heavy borders that had framed scenes are lightened or altogether abandoned, and most compositions are reduced to just a few or even

*The details in the middle of this page are taken from the sides of a wine cup, and depict two naked girls at a party. One lifts a heavy cup filled with wine carefully to her lips. The other peers into the bottom of an amphora to see whether there is any wine left; her flute case is dangling from her leg.*

*The scene at the bottom is taken from an Apulian situla (pail). A satyr fills a phiale with an oinochoe from a calyx krater (mixing bowl). The krater itself is decorated with two figures.*

*Opposite page: A man and hetaira at a drinking party. The girl has hooked a finger into the handle of a nearly empty kylix and spins it around in a game called kottabos. The man's kylix must be full, because he holds it by the foot and stem.*

single figures. The beginnings of this trend can be detected in late works by Euphronios, but a perfect balance is not achieved until such figures as the Berlin Painter's ecstatic kithara player (Figure 21), whose very contours seem to agree with the silhouette of the vase, or the balanced apposition of Herakles and Apollo on the neck amphora by the Kleophrades Painter (Figure 20): here the story – the struggle for the Delphic tripod – is neatly divided between the two sides of the vase, each giving to its half of the composition a self-contained stability.

At about this time the painters begin to show preferences for certain shapes, with a resulting degree of specialization, so that a distinction can be made between cup painters and pot painters. The Attic drinking cup (kylix) has a long and distinguished history going back to the first quarter of the sixth century B.C. Though the shape passed through a great many changes, the figure decoration remained attached to the same areas: a tondo – or disk – on the inside and friezes on the outside. The standard kylix afforded much freedom of decoration. Freedom and challenge – for the tondo, with its denial of verticals and horizontals, required a compositional skill not readily mastered by every painter. The great cup painters of this period are Onesimos, Makron, Douris, and the Brygos Painter (Figures 23, 24, 25), whose activities came to an end shortly after the victory over the Persians in 479 B.C.

With liberty and independence established, Athens grew powerful and rich. In the arts we approach what is justly called the classic period, culminating in the new buildings on the Acropolis. It is at this time that wall and panel paintings emerge from their obscure beginnings, and we hear of masterpieces by Polyg-



notos and Mikon painted for walls of buildings like the Theseion and the Painted Porch. Of these large-scale paintings not a scrap has been recovered, but we have guidebook descriptions of their subjects and other scattered references to them. Neither literature nor vase painting informs us about any comparable panel or wall paintings of the archaic period; but, beginning in the second quarter of the fifth century, vase paintings suddenly include new types of compositions and a curious preference for certain mythological subjects, which must be attributed to outside influences. In the early classic period, many favorite scenes begin to disappear, and more and more of the vase painters seem to be competing not among themselves but with the famous painters of their day. As the archaic restraint gives way to the greater freedom of the classic period, something is lost of that balance by which shape and decoration were united: the new style brought with it an interest in ambitious compositions and larger scale that do not suit the curved surfaces of a vase so readily as the flat panels and walls. The potting itself becomes increasingly poor – that is to say, less inventive. Almost all shapes that already existed continue, but they are now “refined” to an elegance that often borders on affectation.

Great vase painters, however, still flourish for two generations, and many a vase in the early classic and classic period is truly memorable. The most significant advance lies in the treatment of moods and attitudes. The “noble simplicity and



quiet grandeur'' with which Winckelmann characterized classic Greek art are introduced into even the simplest groupings; each figure keeps a certain distance from the next and moves or stands with an almost trained grace. Even scenes with satyrs and maenads become unexpectedly quiet. Some of the finest vases of this period are no longer painted in the red-figure technique, but employ a white slip on which the subjects are drawn in outline with several additional ceramic colors for garments and accessories, as well as some ever-so-sparse indications of landscape. White-ground and red-figure go side by side, and while the Penthesilea Painter, for instance, is named after a monumental red-figured cup in Munich, his white-ground pyxis with the Judgment of Paris (Figure 27) ranks securely among his masterpieces. The splendid scene of a goddess sacrificing on a white-ground cup by the Villa Giulia Painter (Figure 28) is another example of an artist using both techniques to perfection.

In battle scenes, on the other hand, the big paintings on the walls of the Theseion and the Painted Porch had introduced a technique of suggesting depth by what is called cavalier perspective: since true perspective, as we have known it since the Renaissance, had not yet been mastered, the figures, whether near or far, were all shown of the same height but on different levels, with considerable overlapping. Many a vase painter tried to translate this fashion into the much smaller area of a vase, and it is thanks to these ambitious attempts that we can grasp something of the overall effect of the lost wall paintings. One of the favorite subjects is the battle between Athenians and Amazons (Figure 29): in an age that avoided direct political propaganda, the legendary Athenian victory over a band of foreign invaders served as the mythical precursor of the more recent victory of the Athenians over the Persians. In keeping with the new interest in the mythical Athenian past, Attic heroes and their exploits gradually displace heroes like Herakles, so popular in the sixth century B.C.

The new freedom in composition is paralleled by innovations in draughtsmanship: the human body is now shown in every conceivable pose and position, with much foreshortening and with a great many three-quarter views. Drapery folds lose their starched rigidity and hug the contours of the body. There is also some shading to show the hollow of a fold, the convexity of a shield, or the roundness of a vessel, but the figures remain evenly lit and cast no shadows. Toward the end of the fifth century, added white suddenly reappears for the flesh of women and



small figures of Eros, and for numerous details. Gilding, which in the archaic period had been used to represent exceptional objects like scepters or golden libation bowls, now becomes commonplace. Women in all their occupations predominate and are always shown as ladies, even when being abducted (Figure 31).

The Peloponnesian war, culminating in the defeat of Athens, all but stopped the profitable export of Attic pottery to the West, and this sudden void was filled by local schools that arose in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy and Sicily. At first, these local artists cling close to their Athenian models for both shapes and decoration. In the fourth century, however, the gap widens, and the contacts, if any, become scarce. Much of South Italian vase painting is rather summary in design and execution, but there were enough talented painters with original ideas to create imposing works. Few of them, however, seem to have succeeded in mastering the complex relationship of painting to vase, and even the finest paintings suffer from being unrelated to the shape of the object they decorate.

Red-figure had gone a long way, and all the possibilities of its technique had been exhausted. But the glaze fired as black as ever, and among the more pleasing vases are those that have figures – or only ornaments – painted in opaque ceramic colors on the lustrous black ground (Figure 34). This technique had been briefly fashionable in Athens about 500 B.C., a counterpart, as it were, to the white-ground technique; how it reached Southern Italy a hundred years later is not entirely clear, but as it was also practiced in Etruria from the early fifth century on, it may have reached Apulia from Central Italy.

Toward the very end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century, red-figure comes to a complete halt in all parts of the ancient world, although black-figure, or the simpler form of silhouette decoration, had never entirely ceased and lingers on. In Sicily, the last phase of red-figure had seen the addition of non-ceramic colors to the vases after firing; later in the third century B.C., red-figure, which even with added colors is essentially a ceramic technique, was completely supplanted by pottery that was first fired and then painted. Now, for the first time, we have the full palette of the painter, and these vases, of which one of the finest is illustrated as Figure 35, curiously anticipate in their compositions and color scheme many of the wall paintings of two hundred years later found in the cities and villages buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.

This is a sketch, in barest outline, of the history of vase painting. Its long development, remarkable continuity, and abundant survival make pottery the most important material in any study of antiquity. Paintings on vases tell us more about the Greeks, what they looked like, what they did, and what they believed in than any single literary text. Thus even a vase with poor drawing oftentimes takes on a special significance because of a story told for the first time, or a detail illuminated. A series of vase paintings of a given period is our best evidence for its artistic taste, and a comprehensive collection of vases, like the one in the Metropolitan Museum, becomes an encyclopedia opened simultaneously at all the important places. The large number of masterpieces in the Museum guarantees that the collection is not just an assembly of footnotes conveniently displayed, but that it deepens our appreciation of Greek art. In this context the average does not take away from the best; rather, like the broad base of a pyramid it directs the gaze to its summit and supports it.

Each of the vases illustrated here, while typical of its time and artist, should serve as a starting point toward that fuller exploration of the field that is rendered so easy by the collection from which these representatives were chosen. Here inquisitive visitors will be rewarded beyond their expectations, as they discover for themselves the wealth of material waiting for them. No doubt they will soon find their own favorites, but let this brief survey and the following highlights act as a map on which some of the peaks and most of the boundaries are indicated.



This view of a large wall case in one of the Museum's vase galleries gives most of the shapes of Attic vases from the late sixth to the fourth century B.C. In the top row, reading from left to right, we see one-piece amphorae of types A, B, and C; a neck amphora; and a pelike—all used for wine and oil. The last vase is a hydria (water jar).

The second row, again from left to right, has an aryballos (oil bottle), an alabastron (perfume vase), an amphoriskos (perfume vase), four pyxides (cosmetic vases), a lekanis (covered dish), a smegmatotheke (perfume vase), a miniature lebes gamikos and a loutrophoros (both used in wedding ceremonies and for the tomb), and two

lekythoi (oil jugs)—one small and squat, the other tall and cylindrical.

The third row gives a variety of drinking cups: kylix type A, type B, and type C; a stemless kylix; four different, deeper bowls (skyphoi); and two kantharoi.

The short fourth shelf displays almost all the known types of wine jugs (oinochoai); the third from the end may also have served as a drinking cup.

In the bottom row is shown first a stamnos (a storage jar for wine), and then five types of mixing bowls: dinos, column krater, bell krater, volute krater, and calyx krater. Into the bell krater has been put, as if floating, a psykter (wine-cooler).

# Greek Vase Painting

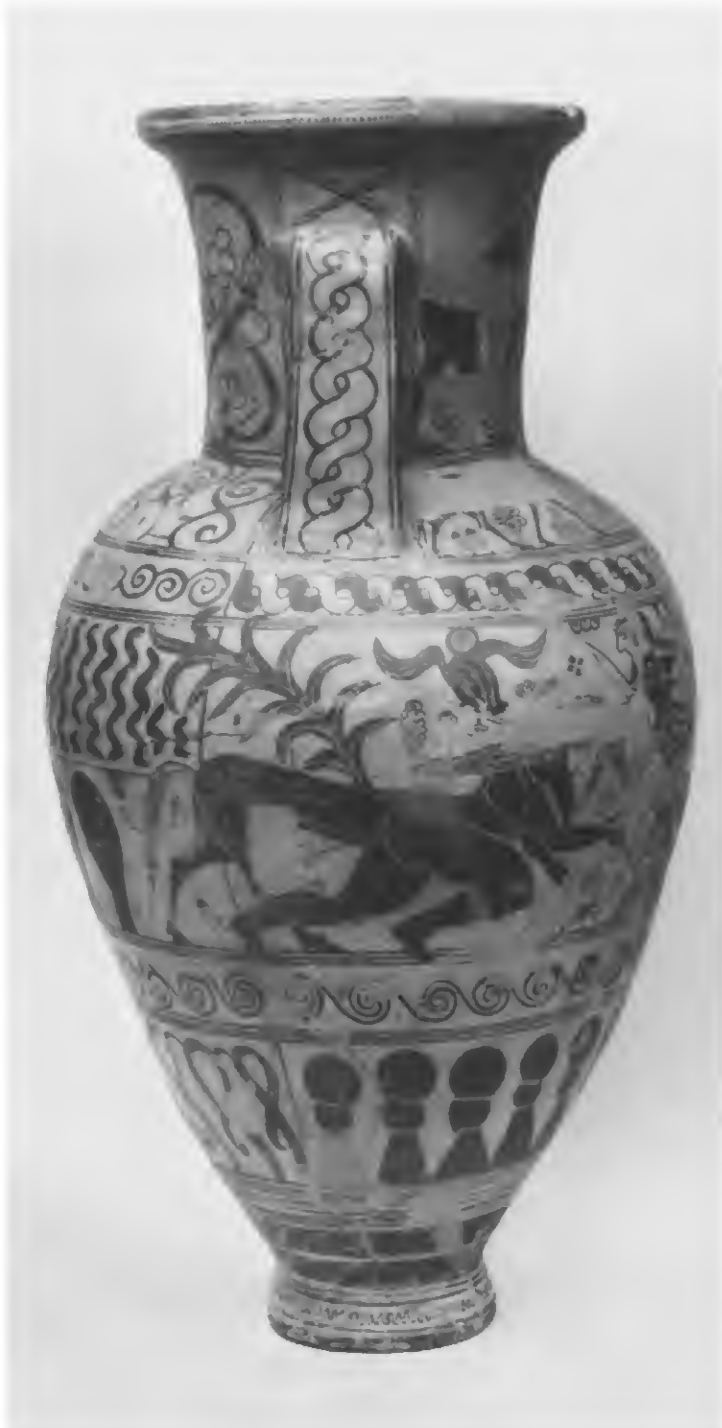


1. This neck amphora belongs to the latest phase of the geometric style, dated about 700 B.C. The subjects – mourning women on the neck, a procession of chariots and horsemen on the body – reveal the function of the vase as a grave monument. In the drawing some progress from the earlier geometric styles can be observed in the silhouettes: the figures are no longer quite so angular, and the eyes are now dots set in a reserved circle. The lions on the shoulder point toward the beginning of Oriental influences. Snakes are added in relief on the lip, the handles, and the shoulder.

Height 30 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (77.7 cm). Rogers Fund, 1910 (10.210.8)







2. This monumental neck amphora is one of the most important Attic vases of the orientaling period. Dated in the second quarter of the seventh century B.C., it exemplifies the Black-and-White Style that takes its name from the profusion of added white introduced next to the black of the glaze. Little is left of geometric traditions, except in the shape and great size of the vase, as well as in the disposition of the figures on the neck, shoulder, and body. This vase shows a definite distinction between front and back: all the figures are concentrated on the front, and the chief picture has been expanded beyond the meridians furnished by the handles. The entire reverse is given over to the "new" curvilinear ornaments.

On the front Herakles dispatches the centaur Nessos, who has let go of the tree branch he was carrying and sinks to his knees, pleading for mercy with both hands. Herakles strides calmly and confidently. With one hand he has seized the centaur by his long hair; the other holds the sword ready to strike. Some of the violence of this scene is conveyed by the movement of the hair and by the owl in flight. Behind Herakles his chariot waits patiently for the outcome of the fight, but in front of the horses a little man runs up almost as if afraid to miss the excitement. On the shoulder of the vase two horses with nicely combed manes and tails are seen grazing. On the neck a lion, all its teeth bared, is attacking a fallow deer. Most of the background of the vase is filled by all kinds of ornaments, and on the ground line five spindly water birds look for food. Silhouette and outline go side by side, and there is also much incision: the essentials of the black-figure technique are already in use.

Height 42¾ inches (108.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1911 (11.210.1)





3. This krater, a bowl for mixing wine and water, is called a column krater since the handles are like columns that support platforms. Of all the krater shapes it was the favorite of Corinthian potters. Unlike Attic glaze, Corinthian glaze did not always fuse properly with the body of the vase and has often peeled off; for that reason the scene on the front is here shown in a drawing. The chief pictures on the shoulder are separated by the handles, but the broad space under them is admirably filled by sirens that spread their wings, repeating the curves of the handles. Both sirens look toward the front of the vase, which shows the wedding procession of Paris and Helen. They are accompanied by four Trojan couples wearing festive dress. Most of them have their names written beside them, and we read Daiphon, Hector, Automedousa, and Hippios(?). The solitary warrior on the extreme right is Hippolytos, another son of Priam. He may be thought of as the vanguard of the four cavalymen that move at a slow pace on the reverse of the krater, each leading a void horse.

In the zone below, which runs right around the vase, a group of a goat facing a panther is repeated four times. A sphinx is painted on top of each handle platform. Floral ornaments are kept to a minimum.

By its shape and figure style the vase is dated in the first quarter of the sixth century. Height 16 inches (40.6 cm). Funds from various donors, 1927 (27.116)



4. In the sixth century B.C. Laconian artists enjoyed considerable fame, not only for their excellent bronze sculptures but also in the field of vase painting. This elegant drinking cup was found in Sardis, the capital of Lydia, in a tomb that also included two Attic vases. The kylix was the favorite shape of Laconian potters and was exported widely. As in contemporary Attic vase painting, different artists have been distinguished and, in the absence of signatures, have been given conventional names. This cup is attributed to the Rider Painter (named after the rider on a cup in London), the last of the great Laconian painters who flourished around the middle of the sixth century B.C. The tondo of the cup is decorated with a sphinx in the company of two birds, and this image is harmoniously framed within circles of colored bands and a step pattern. The inside of the offset lip is decorated with a band of exceptionally elaborate lotuses alternating with pomegranates in two tiers. The outside has a triple net on the lip; a pomegranate festoon flanked by palmettes in the handle zone and above the foot; rays below and again on the upper part of the stem; and a tongue pattern, as well as many red and black bands. The result is a perfect balance between the black glaze, the light color of the slip, and the darker clay ground.

About 550–540 B.C. Height 5 inches (12.7 cm); width across handles 9½ inches (24.1 cm). Gift of the Subscribers to the Fund for Excavations at Sardis, 1914 (14.30.26)





5. This neck amphora has been attributed to an anonymous Chalcidian artist, called the Painter of the Cambridge Hydria after his best-known work in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. There is much in the decoration that links his style to Corinthian models. Front and back are again neatly divided and the scenes, three sirens on the shoulder and a palmette configuration between two cocks below, display a symmetry that evokes heraldry. In the side views, however, we discover that the heraldic animals on the body frieze are separated by two men half-kneeling, half-running. One of them has turned his face toward us. Such frontal faces are rare in archaic art and are intended to be either frightening (as the gorgon's on the shield of Hippolytos on the Corinthian vase, Figure 3) or humorous.

The vase is intact, and the Chalcidian glaze rivals the Attic in its impeccable quality. About 540 B.C. Height 11½ inches (29.2 cm). Dodge Fund, 1963 (63.11.3)





6. Ancient art was not limited by political frontiers, and the freedom with which artists and their ideas traveled is demonstrated admirably by this small perfume vase. Anatolian conventions in the vessel's shape and ornaments are mingled with a figure style of drawing that is pure East Greek in technique and execution of the animal zone, but makes concessions to a non-Greek environment in the scene on the shoulder of the obverse. There a youth is shown leading two winged horses by the halter—a scene observed by a curious bird, perhaps a swallow, perched on a stylized plant. Behind the bird a couple drives a biga, a chariot reminiscent in its construction of Mesopotamian models. A fourth man painted in the same brown glaze as his companions is shown squatting on the fragmentary lateral wall of the spout. Opposite the spout the potter has added to the wheel-made bowl an extension equipped with a deep square hole; its flat top lines up with a separate adjunct—the neck and head of a ram whose square base is furnished with a round hole. Since the shape of this small vessel with its incurving wall is that of a perfume vessel, the ram may have been the handle of a cosmetic stick or brush, which, when not in use, rested on the platform, with its protrusion safely held in the square shaft. To make sure that the fancy brush or stick would not get lost, the base and the ram's neck are perforated horizontally to accommodate a string that would keep the two parts together, a convention already known from pyxides of the geometric period.

The checkerboard ornaments of the vertical walls recall Lydian or Phrygian patterns, and the vase may well have been made in that part of the ancient world.

Late seventh century B.C. Height to top of ram's head  $3\frac{7}{8}$  inches (9.8 cm). Classical Purchase Fund, 1977 (1977.11.3)





7. Corinthian influence was felt in Athens and this drinking cup is attributed to the C Painter (the C standing for Corinthianizing). The gorgon in the tondo of the cup looks her most forbidding, with teeth bared and tongue, somewhat misplaced, sticking out. The gorgon is both flying and running: the movement of her legs was no doubt thought of as increasing her speed.

In the pictures on the outside (shown on the opposite page), Corinthian influence is most noticeable in the lack of relation between the subjects. On the front Achilles is pursuing Troilos, who had accompanied his sister Polyxena to a fountain house outside the walls of Troy. In her flight, Polyxena has dropped the water jar and a frightened hare follows her. The eagle above portends an omen, as did the owl on the Nessos amphora (Figure 2). The reverse shows four horsemen riding up, as on the back of many a Corinthian work, but they need not be connected with the other side.

About 575 B.C. Height  $5\frac{1}{8}$  inches (13.0 cm), diameter  $9\frac{5}{8}$  inches (24.5 cm). Purchase, 1901 (01.8.6)

Right: The exterior of the drinking cup attributed to the C Painter.



8 (left). This gorgon's head – our third – decorates the top of a little stand that has the distinction of being signed by a famous team of painter and potter, the Attic artists Kleitias and Ergotimos; they are best known from their masterpiece in Florence named the "François Vase" after its discoverer. Though some of the earlier conventions are maintained – bared teeth, beard, tongue sticking out – there are significant changes: the serrated incisors (six in number) are flanked by tusks, and the tongue is correctly drawn as protruding between the teeth. The little space between the feline nose and the open mouth is filled with stubble of a mustache, and the ears are pierced for earrings. In the eyes, the white rings surrounding the pupils have now worn off, but this touch must originally have added to the ferocity.

About 570 B.C. Height  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches (5.7 cm), diameter  $3\frac{1}{16}$  inches (9.1 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1931 (31.11.4)





9. The narrative element, so prominent in later Greek vase painting, was not yet fully developed or preferred by the first generation of Attic black-figure vase painters, in whose works animals or monsters still predominate. This krater is of an experimental shape that owes much to contemporary metal vases: the round handles that loop over each side of the shoulder are connected with the projecting rim of the vessel by a broad flanged strap that rises and curves down over the flat level of the mouth. On later examples the curve turns into a coil or volute, and kraters thus equipped are termed volute kraters. The beasts that decorate the panels of this vase are quite imposing; on the better-preserved side two powerful boars, their snouts half-opened, big eyes ablaze, confront each other; the back (of which large parts are missing) preserves most of an equally fierce bull and the remains of an elaborate filling ornament. On the analogy of the obverse, the missing animal may have been another bull. Note that the ornaments, so exuberant in the works of the earliest Attic black-figure painters, have become quite restrained, consisting of not more than two stars between the boars, tongues above the panels, ivy on the side and the top of the rim, and rays above the foot. The incised lines, sure and precise, are doubled for strength in the contours of the shoulders.

About 580–570 B.C. Attributed to Sophilos. Height as restored 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>32</sub> inches (49.15 cm). Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Fried Gift, 1977 (1977.11.2)



10. This very large mixing bowl – it holds nineteen gallons when filled to the neck – depicts the return of Hephaistos to Mt. Olympus. No fewer than twenty-seven satyrs and maenads are shown in a frieze that continues all the way around the vase. The procession is accented on one side by Dionysos, who seems to stand still, and on the other side by Hephaistos, mounted on a donkey. Among the satyrs there are two that turn their faces toward the spectator; the others are busy with their burdens of wineskins, grapes, grapevines, or ivy tendrils. One of them plays the flutes, another holds a drinking horn, and one has his tail pulled by a maenad.

The animals that formed a secondary frieze on the Corinthian column krater are now relegated to the top of the rim. Note also that the chief figures extend well below the equator of the vase and, in fact, occupy the space of the shoulder zone *and* the subsidiary frieze. The handle platforms are decorated with gorgon heads.

The krater ranks among the acknowledged masterpieces by Lydos, an Attic vase painter whose name is known from two signatures. About one hundred vases are attributed to him, and there are, in addition, several hundred more that were painted in his manner, by his companions, and by his followers. The krater in the Museum shows Lydos at the height of his development, shortly after the middle of the sixth century B.C.

Height  $22\frac{3}{16}$  inches (56.4 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1931 (31.11.11)









11. This exceptionally fine lekythos (or oil jug) by the Amasis Painter tells us in great detail about an important aspect of the Athenian wedding ceremony, the homecoming of the bride. Bride, groom, and best man are shown in the first cart drawn by a team of donkeys while four guests follow in a mule cart. Several other guests accompany the procession on foot. The mother of the bridegroom awaits their arrival in the door of the bridegroom's house, whose wooden columns have been freshly painted. Two torches in the hands of the mother-in-law indicate that it is evening or nighttime. On the shoulder a chorus of nine girls performs a dance to the music of lyre and flutes.

The Amasis Painter shuns traditional subjects, and his pictures are either loose groupings of gods and heroes or show episodes not encountered elsewhere. A companion piece to this lekythos, also in the Museum, has for its theme women working wool.

Height 6 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (17.5 cm). Purchase, Walter C. Baker Gift, 1956 (56.11.1)





12. Exekias, to whom this neck amphora is attributed, was both potter and painter, and under him Attic black-figure reaches its acme. The invention of several new shapes like the eye cup and the calyx krater can be credited to him. Other shapes, like the neck amphora, are considerably transformed. As painter, he is distinguished by an extraordinary precision of silhouette and of incised line. The latter is no longer used merely to add details and to define overlapping forms: through its skillful use Exekias achieves the effect of shading and hatching that results in a noticeable lightening of the heavy black masses. Note how the areas of black glaze on this vase are in perfect balance with the unglazed portions.

The exact meaning of the subjects eludes us, because the figures are not identified by inscribed names or attributes. Since the woman in the chariot holds the reins while the man is a mere passenger, the scene resembles the representations of Herakles conducted by Athena to Mount Olympos, and the youth playing the kithara may well be Apollo. The subject is repeated on the reverse. A battle rages on the shoulder of the vase, which turns in sharply.

About 540 B.C. Height 18½ inches (47 cm); height with lid 22 inches (55.88 cm). Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.230.14)



13. From the second quarter of the sixth century on, a special type of standardized neck amphora was developed that was awarded at the contests of the Panathenaic festival in Athens. These vases contained one *metretres* (about forty-two quarts) of olive oil grown in sacred olive groves in Attica. They show their official character by the picture of a statue of Athena, patron of Athens, on the front (above). Athena stands in full armor between two columns surmounted by cocks. Alongside the left column is the inscription “one of the prizes from Athens.” Once the tradition of placing this subject on the front was established, artists had little latitude for variations, but as they treated the image of Athena not as a statue but a living goddess, a certain freedom in her dress and armor was tolerated. The foot race on the reverse refers to the event for which the amphora (and the oil) was awarded. The five sprinters – four men and a youth – are somewhat telescoped to fit into the panel. The wealth of incised lines employed for the musculature reflects the interest in anatomy that became a preoccupation with Greek sculptors and painters. The heads, arms, abdomens, and legs are in strict profile, but the necks and chests are shown in front view, with the transition between the two aspects not yet mastered.

The amphora has been attributed to the Euphiletos Painter, named after an inscription praising the boy Euphiletos on an amphora in London. The date is about 530 B.C. Height 24½ inches (62.2 cm). Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.12)



14. Unlike Corinthian, Laconian, and Chalcidian black-figured vase painters, Boeotian artists were closer to their Athenian neighbors and strongly influenced by the styles developed and established in Attica. The repertory of Boeotian black-figure is more limited in both shapes potted and subjects represented than that of other fabrics. The kantharos, however, may almost be termed a favorite of Boeotian artists, and the one here shown, though not the most ambitious of its class, is a good example of a shape that was closely associated with the god Dionysos. The

spurs on the handles afford a good grip of the drinking vessel, which, when filled with wine, must have been quite heavy. The subject—a bull between two lions—is repeated on the other side. The dot-rosette between the lion and the bull, which recalls the stars on the Attic krater by Sophilos (Figure 9), is a survival of the orientalizing period in which the background is literally covered with filling ornaments.

About 560–550 B.C. Height  $7\frac{1}{8}$  inches (18.1 cm); width across handles  $9\frac{5}{8}$  inches (24.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1966 (66.11.2)





15. Several of the earliest red-figured vases bear the signature of the Athenian potter Andokides; some of them are painted by an artist named, after the potter, the Andokides Painter. It has therefore been claimed that the new technique was invented by the Andokides Painter. Most of the vases decorated by him are, like this one, panel amphorae of the type refined by Exekias: the flat handles are flanged and have ivy vines on their sides; the foot is in two degrees, and a fillet joins the base of the amphora with the foot. For red-figure the scheme of decoration had to be modified slightly. Now that the background of the scenes is black, the panel has to be separated firmly from the rest of the vase; this is accomplished through the addition of ornamental borders at the sides.

The amphora signed by the potter Andokides in the Museum may well be the earliest vase painted by the Andokides Painter. Not content with introducing red-figure, the artist has also attempted another novelty: he covered the sides of the mouth with white slip and on this painted a diminutive frieze in black-figure. The white-ground technique has not yet been perfected; here the black glaze has not fused properly with the white ground and thus has flaked off in some places.

The great advantages of red-figure over black-figure are immediately manifest as we look at the vase from a distance and see how clearly the composition stands out. The subject of the panel on the front is the struggle between Herakles and Apollo over the Delphic tripod. Both are pulling with all their might, and each has an onlooker who sides with him, without, however, taking part. Next to Herakles is Athena, and behind Apollo is Artemis.



The conflict will be settled only by the arrival of Zeus: it must be imminent. This subject became famous through the pediment of the Siphnian treasury at Delphi, and there are details in the drawing of the vase that can be traced directly to the Siphnian sculptures. On the reverse Dionysos stands quietly in front of a maenad who plays the krotala (something like castanets), as a satyr approaches softly on the left (details above and left).

While the principles of red-figure are already fully established on this vase, its refinements are yet to come. Most of the inner markings of the bodies are drawn in heavy relief lines rather than in thin lines

of dilute glaze. Conversely, incision is still used as it was in black-figure, for details in the black as on Athena's helmet, her hair, that of Herakles and Artemis, and, of course, for the contours of all the heads. Also, purple-red, one of the accessory colors of black-figure, is still employed: here it can be seen in the ivy leaves of Dionysos's vines, the cheekpiece of Athena's helmet, the snakes of her gorgoneion, the staples on the tripod, and Apollo's arrowheads.

Height 22 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (57.5 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1963 (63.11.6)



16. Another artist who painted for the potter Andokides is Psiax. He is known not only from a dozen very fine red-figured vases but also from twice that many black-figured ones. It is Psiax who must be credited with having advanced the red-figure technique beyond the achievements of the Andokides Painter. He was, above all, a more skilled and enterprising draughtsman who did not shun difficult new composi-

tions. His cup in the Museum is one of the first of its type drawn without the eyes made fashionable by Exekias. Here he has attempted a fallen warrior seen from behind, which, except for the crest, is quite successful.

Height  $4\frac{3}{8}$  inches (11.1 cm), diameter  $11\frac{1}{4}$  inches (28.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.146.1)

17. Although the new technique, Attic red-figure, had made its appearance about 530–525 B.C., many fine vases continued to be painted in the black-figure technique for at least one generation. The very height to which black-figure had risen under Exekias left its profound mark among artists trained in black-figure. The influence of Exekias, however, was not limited merely to technical refinements: many of his compositions became artistic currency, to be copied or developed. Ajax and Achilles playing at draughts during the siege of Troy are best known from a memorable amphora signed by Exekias and now in the Vatican. On this hydria (a water jar) painted fifteen or twenty years later, the same subject reappears with some modifications. Both heroes have identical armor, even to the devices on their shields. As their names are not given (the many inscriptions in the field are meaningless) we cannot tell who is Ajax and who is Achilles, nor do we know who is winning. Novel in this composition is the presence of Athena, who literally interferes: she has come to alert the Greek heroes to a Trojan attack on the Greek camp, and her left arm is raised in a gesture of alarm. For the moment the two Greeks are still unaware of her and continue with their game, but presently they will rise and don their shields and helmets. The picture on the shoulder is given over to a departure scene: one warrior walks off, looking round at his father of whom he has taken leave; another warrior is mounting a chariot. A relative, accompanied by a dog, sits in front of the horses.

Attributed to an artist of the Leagros Group (named after five black-figured hydriai on which the young Leagros is praised as handsome); about 515 B.C. Height  $21\frac{5}{16}$  inches (54.1 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1956 (56.171.29)









18. Among the new shapes that make their appearance in the last quarter of the sixth century is the psykter (wine-cooler). Wine was poured into this vessel, which was then set into a krater filled with snow or ice water; even when empty the psykter floated upright, the cylindrical stem serving as a keel. On psykters without handles, such as this one attributed to Oltos, the scene runs right around the vase: it must be remembered that a psykter would often be seen spinning around in the krater after a cup had been filled from it. The eight figures here are grouped in a pair and two threesomes, with each separation accented by a vertical inscription. Most of the figures are named; in addition the vase itself speaks to the spectator by saying "I have my mouth wide open" and "drink me," and one of the athletes is captioned "he is going to jump." Athletes were fast becoming a favorite subject in Attic vase painting, and their popularity was based in part on the opportunities they afforded for drawing the nude body. The old scheme of combining profile and frontal views for different parts of the body continues, but the transition between the two aspects begins to be solved, with a hint of corporeal perspective.

Height 13 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (34.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1910 (10.210.18)



19. This calyx krater (bowl for mixing wine and water) is signed by the potter Euxitheos and by the painter Euphronios. An inscription praising the young Leagros helps to date it in the penultimate decade of the sixth century B.C. It is therefore contemporary with the black-figured hydria of the Leagros Group (Figure 17) and the red-figured psykter by Oltos (Figure 18), but, as will be seen at a glance, a vase painted by Euphronios is superior to most painted by his contemporaries. Of black-figure conventions only the incision around the black hair remains. The relief line is applied boldly and accurately; different dilutions of the glaze matter produce a range of colors from light ocher to deep brown; opaque red is used judiciously—for the blood gushing forth, for baldrics, the straps of Hermes's petasos, the edges of crests on helmets, and for the inscriptions.

But even more astonishing than the virtuosity of the brush and the sureness of line is the grandiose design of the compositions. The handles on a calyx krater call for a division between front and back because, as the handles curl up, part of the wall behind them is always obscured. Handle areas are therefore traditionally the place for ornaments; the palmette configurations do not suffer from being partly hidden by the handle.

The front and back of the vase contain two oblong picture fields, areas that have the advantage of being relatively regular. For the front Euphronios chose a most majestic scene: an episode from the death of Sarpedon. When this Lycian prince and son of Zeus was killed by Patroklos before Troy, his father asked Apollo to remove him from the battlefield, to bathe his body, and to let the twin brothers, Sleep and Death, carry the dead hero to his homeland. Here Sarpedon stretches all the way across the front and, in being lifted by Sleep and Death, his torso turns toward the spectator. This to Euphronios is the preferred view of the human body, since it gives him the opportunity to render all the anatomical details that he was the





first to understand fully and to render correctly. Others, like his rival Euthymides, may have paid more attention to drapery and difficult positions, but he alone among his contemporaries articulates the structure of the human body in a harmony of lines, many of them drawn in dilute glaze and as graceful as they are simple. While shading proper is not yet practiced, the wings and the cuirass of Death contrast through their multiple detail with the relatively empty areas of the helmets and bodies; indeed, through this alternation between areas with much detail and others without any, Euphronios achieves the same pictorial effect as had Exekias. The fame of Euphronios does not, of course, rest on this vase alone: until recently it was based only on such masterpieces as the Antaios krater in the Louvre, the Geryon cup in Munich, and the Amazon krater in Arezzo. The Museum's vase surpasses all of them through its magnificent composition and superior preservation.

On the reverse, warriors are shown donning their arms and armor; the central one is still almost nude. All the warriors are named, and while the names are common in mythology and Attic history, they do not indicate any known event or battle. No other arming scenes are known by Euphronios, whereas there are two by Euthymides.

The combination of Sleep and Death carrying the body of a dead hero with an arming scene on the reverse also occurs on a contemporary red-figured cup signed by Pamphaios as potter and attributed to the Nikosthenes Painter; this work has long been counted as the earliest representation of Sarpedon in Attic art. It is now clear that the pictures on the cup were not created by the Nikosthenes Painter, but are his adaptation of what he had learned from Euphronios.

Height 18 inches (45.7 cm), diameter 21¾ inches (55.15 cm). Purchase, Bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, Gift of Darius Ogden Mills and Gift of C. Ruxton Love, by exchange, 1972 (1972.11.10)























20. These two pictures of Herakles and of Apollo occur on opposite sides of a tall, slender neck amphora attributed to the Kleophrades Painter (named after the potter Kleophrades). The story depicted is the same as on the amphora by the Andokides Painter (Figure 15): Herakles has stolen the Delphic tripod and Apollo tries to recapture his property. By now the rigid scheme of framed panels is on its way out and the more inventive artists try to reduce the traditional compositions to fewer figures. The figures themselves are placed on the vase in such a manner that the silhouette of the vase serves as the frame, obviating panels and their heavy borders. Apollo has not yet caught up with Herakles: on the vase itself, the distance between the two is emphasized. Herakles is as sturdy as on the amphora by the Andokides Painter, but now there is some hesitation in his face with the half-opened lips and a greater tension in his body. By way of subtle contrast Apollo strides calmly and confidently – not one of his long tresses is in disarray; his face is equally unperturbed, and the single gesture of the outstretched right arm is one of silent command. There is something statuesque in both figures, an impression reinforced by the short ornamental border on which each stands, which resembles the plinth of a statue.

The Kleophrades Painter has always been counted as a pupil of Euthymides and his earliest panel amphorae do, indeed, resemble those by the earlier master. In the choice of his subjects, however, no direct links with the preserved works by his teacher exist, and perhaps he took his inspiration from other artists of the Pioneer Group as well, notably Euphronios.

About 490–480 B.C. Height 18 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (47.3 cm). Rogers Fund, 1913 (13.233)





21. The painter of this amphora is called the Berlin Painter after his masterpiece in Berlin. He, like the Kleophrades Painter, issues from the Pioneer Group, and as is often the case with Greek artists, his earliest vases are his best. The citharode on the front is one of the most beautifully balanced figures in all vase painting. The youthful musician sings to his own accompaniment. His head is thrown back and his knees are slightly bent. That he is swaying with the music is further

shown by the undulating decorative sash attached to the kithara. On the opposite side of the amphora a stern judge listens and signals with his right hand.

On this vase the frames are again absent and we do not even have a ground line, yet the figures stand firmly (the judge on a somewhat higher level). Thanks to their skillful placement, there is no distortion when the vase is viewed straight on.

About 490 B.C. Height 16<sup>11</sup>/<sub>32</sub> inches (41.5 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1956 (56.171.38)







22. As early as the second quarter of the sixth century, vases were decorated with scenes excerpted from traditional compositions containing many more figures; as we have seen, in the late archaic period single figures take on a new importance. This picture of Ganymede with hoop and gamecock is taken from a composition that showed Zeus in pursuit of the handsome Trojan prince. The boy runs as fast as he can, looking around at his pursuer. Without the knowledge of fuller scenes that include Zeus, this picture would mean to us only a running boy: in antiquity, however, the tradition of compositional types was so strong that a mere excerpt evoked the whole story.

Attributed to the Pan Painter (named after the subject of a vase in Boston); dated about 480–470 B.C. Height 6½ inches (16.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.160.55)





23. Satyrs and maenads figure prominently in the entourage of Dionysos and it is their prerogative to cavort with a freedom and abandon seldom witnessed in daily life. The mastery of the human anatomy in late archaic art led to bold compositions in which these companions of Dionysos are captured in all their wild frenzy.

On this cup, attributed to Makron and dated about 490–480 B.C., Dionysos himself is not even shown, and the satyrs and maenads have the vase to themselves. Makron often painted drapery as if it were transparent, revealing his firm knowledge of anatomy. Here, arms and legs move in the rhythm of a dance, and the open hands, with fingers spread apart, are often more expressive than the faces. Above all, Makron is a master of composition, and even the artificial circle of the tondo looks natural when filled with his figures.

Height 5 inches (12.7 cm), diameter 11¼ inches (28.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1906 (06.1152)





24. Douris, to whom this kylix has been attributed, is the third great cup painter of the late archaic period. He begins as a follower of Onesimos, who worked for Euphronios when the latter had abandoned vase painting for potting. The career of Douris is a long one, stretching over thirty years which fall into four distinct phases. This cup is of the third, or middle, period in which his style is fully developed. The tondo has become quite large (8¼ inches), permitting the figures to take on a size not readily found in cup tondos by other painters. His emphasis is on precise lines drawn with deliberate economy, and there is little overlapping. In this period he almost invariably uses an exergue that lends

stability to his seated and standing figures. The man's back, bared by the himation that has slipped from his shoulder, demonstrates the ease with which three-quarter views are now rendered, and particularly successful foreshortenings can be seen in the open hands of the boy and of the man.

On the exterior of the kylix are five men with five youths, of whom one is shown nude and should be thought of as an athlete, while another holding a lyre is characterized as a schoolboy.

The cup is dated about 480–470 B.C. Height 4¾ inches (11.1 cm), diameter 11¾ inches (29.9 cm). Rogers Fund, 1952 (52.11.4)









25. The Brygos Painter takes his name from cups signed on the handles by the potter Brygos. Unlike Makron, who painted cups almost exclusively, the Brygos Painter also decorated lekythoi, small neck amphorae, and a series of drinking cups like this one, the lower parts of which were molded in the form of animal or human heads. The combination of molded and wheel-made parts came to Athens from Ionia in the second half of the sixth century B.C., and plastic vases, as they are called, continue to the very end of red-figure, in both Athenian and South Italian workshops.

The Brygos Painter has here chosen to depict two satyrs reclining back to back, as it were. One has made himself comfortable on a rock and plays the flutes; the other reclines on a wineskin and plays the krotala, looking around at his companion. Two full wineskins suspended in the background assure us that the satyrs will not go thirsty. The sculptured portions below the wheel-made mouth of the kantharos represent two girls' faces, joined like a Janus-head behind the ears. No other heads from this mold are known. The ivy wreath in their hair indicates that these girls would be quite at home in the world of the satyrs.

About 480 B.C. Height  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches (19.7 cm). Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.234.5)



26. The Brygos Painter stands at the center of an artistic circle that encompasses at least six painters whose style approximates that of the master and who are at times even his equal. Included among them is the Briseis Painter, named after the figure of Briseis on a cup in London. In many respects he resembles the Brygos Painter, especially in his compositions, but his figures are slenderer and there is much restraint in their positions and gestures. In quiet scenes, as on this cup featuring Theseus, the painter's prevailing mood is most appropriate. Here Theseus is bidding farewell to his father Poseidon and to the Nereids as he prepares to leave the bottom of the sea. The imposing Triton is ready to carry him back to the surface; Poseidon, with the simple gesture of his outstretched right arm, gives the order; the Nereids bid farewell, and the young boy is all eagerness to get back to his adventures. There is much tenderness in this scene and Theseus looks like a very light burden between Triton's massive arms, which have not yet closed around him. On the other side, Theseus has returned to Athens after his victory over the Minotaur. He is greeted by Athena and some of the grateful mothers of the victims intended for the Cretan monster. He has unsheathed the sword that slew the Minotaur as he tells his story.

On the inside of the cup Theseus is shown in the palace of Poseidon receiving gifts from Amphitrite – a fine robe, which he has already put over his arms, and a fillet, which the goddess holds out to him. Unlike Douris (Figure 24), the Brygos Painter and his circle avoid the use of an exergue in cup interiors; the figures are not placed on a horizontal ground line but with their feet on the circular frame of the tondo. In this tondo the frame seems to cut off the back leg of Amphitrite's chair and part of the column behind Theseus; the young hero himself does not stand very securely.

The shape of the vase with its offset lip and somewhat heavy foot is similar to Makron's kylix with satyrs and maenads (Figure 23), but it was probably potted by Brygos.

About 480–475 B.C. Height  $5\frac{3}{16}$  inches (13.2 cm), diameter  $12\frac{1}{16}$  inches (30.7 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1953 (53.11.4) and Gift of Emily Dickinson Blake Vermeule, 1970 (1970.46)





27. The story of the Judgment of Paris, though not recounted in Homer, enters the repertory of Greek art quite early. Sixth-century representations show Hermes conducting the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite to a thoroughly frightened Paris who runs away and does not want to get involved. In most of the early scenes Paris is bearded and fully grown. During the fifth century, the accent shifts. Paris becomes a young boy who is more surprised than frightened and the goddesses are well differentiated, thus hinting at the outcome of the contest. This white-ground pyxis by the Penthesilea Painter (who takes his name from the Amazon queen on a cup in Munich) was a vase made for and used by women. Here Hermes explains his mission to a rather amused-looking Paris, while the goddesses prepare themselves for the contest. Of the three, Athena and Hera are in friendly conversation, whereas Aphrodite stands somewhat apart and addresses herself to Eros. In his facial expression the latter has much in common with Paris. The outcome of the judgment was, of course, known to everybody in antiquity, and in such a picture there was no suspense. Hence the artist concentrated all his attention on Aphrodite, the winner, and on Paris, who is still unaware of the ultimate consequences. This is one of the earliest vases on which the white ground has been used to full advantage. The figures are drawn in glaze outlines, but many of the garments, as well as the rock, are painted in ceramic colors that range from light yellow to a rich brownish red.

About 470 B.C. Height 6¾ inches (17.2 cm). Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.286.36)







28. No vase in the Museum illustrates better than this elegant drinking cup the classic spirit or ethos of Greek art at its height in the mid-fifth century B.C. The picture on the inside is not restricted to a small tondo in the center but fills the entire surface, which is covered with a white slip, or engobe; the black rim of the cup forms a natural frame. Polychrome touches for the dark mantle provide a pleasant contrast to the white flesh of the goddess and her light chiton, which is enlivened by many soft folds drawn in dilute glaze. The young goddess is about to pour a libation on the altar in front of her from the wine-filled phiale in her right hand. With two fingers of her totally relaxed left hand, she balances a long scepter against her shoulder. Her steady gaze is that of a devout worshiper; in a reversal of roles the gods assumed the pose of mortals during religious rites. The altar and the goddess are placed on a ground line that curves slightly so as not to militate against the perfect circle of the frame, just as the figure does not stand bolt upright but seems to sway gently. The artist (the cup is attributed to the Villa Giulia Painter) was not affected by a *horror vacui*; on the contrary, the empty space surrounding the composition is deliberate, since it enhances the solemnity of the scene, the *semnitas*.

The decoration on the outside is equally sparse. There the painter has reverted to the standard red-figure technique but has again shown his feeling for space by dividing the subject, Eos pursuing the Trojan prince Tithonos, between the two sides of the cup, and further separating the figures by simple palmettes with blossoms springing from the lateral tendrils.

About 470–460 B.C. Height  $2\frac{7}{16}$  inches (6.2 cm); width across handles  $8\frac{17}{32}$  inches (21.67 cm). Classical Purchase, Fletcher, and Rogers Funds, 1979 (1979.11.15)





29. The second quarter of the fifth century B.C. saw Athens embark on an ambitious building program that was to culminate later that century in the Periclean Acropolis. Two of the buildings, the Theseion and the Peisianakteion (also known as the Painted Porch), had large panel paintings affixed to their walls, the work of Polygnotos from Thasos and the Athenian Mikon. These works influenced the decoration of some painted vases, and this volute krater is our first example that depends on compositions not native to vases but borrowed from famous contemporary works. The chief picture here is the legendary battle between the Athenians and the Amazons. The Amazons are drawn with a wealth of pictorial detail more at home on large-scale paintings, and the frieze also introduces several levels, terrain lines with shrubs or flowers, as well as half-hidden figures. This is not the only battle of Athenians and Amazons to be depicted on big vases: other artists of the same period, the second quarter of the fifth century, tried their hand at the subject, and all were in one way or another influenced by the paintings of Polygnotos and Mikon.

The battle between Lapiths and centaurs on the neck instantly recalls the west pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Here most of the model has been recovered and allows comparisons. Much of the spirit of the pediment, but little of the individual details, comes through on the vase; the artist had perhaps not gone to Olympia in person, but had gotten his account of the pediment secondhand. For the Amazonomachy, however, we can assume that he knew the paintings intimately; some details, such as the fallen Greek seen from behind with the underside of the right foot showing, a conceit already known to Psiax (Figure 16), may well have also occurred in one of the big paintings.

The Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, to whom the volute krater is attributed, takes his name from the extraordinary creatures on a bell krater in Syracuse. About 470–460 B.C. Height 28¾ inches (73.1 cm). Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.286.84)





30. Not all classic vase painting insists on ambitious compositions that almost burst the frame of their vases. After the middle of the fifth century a quieter strain makes itself felt, which is in greater harmony with the limitations of a vase's surface. By now the white-ground technique had found its noblest expression in a tradition of lekythoi destined for the tomb. Some of them show the grave marker, the dead, and the mourning survivors, but others take their scenes from daily life and thus commemorate the dead in a subtler fashion. The Achilles Painter to whom this lekythos is attributed takes his name from a memorable portrait of the Greek hero on an amphora in the Vatican. He painted both in the red-figure technique and, as in this work, on a white ground. The thin washes of different non-ceramic colors that originally covered the figures have often faded, leaving the bare contours or anatomical lines of the subjects that were painted in glaze; it is the beauty and purity of these lines that have made the Achilles Painter famous. Here a lady hands a bundle of clothes to a somewhat smaller maid: translate these figures into a marble relief and you have the essence of Attic grave reliefs that form our most important body of private classic sculpture.

About 440 B.C. Height  $15\frac{3}{16}$  inches (38.6 cm). Dodge Fund, 1954 (54.11.7)





31. From the self-contained grace of the classic style at its height, vase painting evolves rapidly to a softness and cloying sweetness that mark the beginning of a decline. The heroic element has long been neglected, and even in athletic scenes the muscles and sinews seem to have disappeared. In mythology, it is no longer the exploits of a Theseus or Herakles that fire the imagination but episodes that look curiously romantic. The scene on this small egg—only two inches high—is the abduction of a girl that takes place in the presence of Aphrodite and Eros. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to think of Paris abducting Helen with the help of Aphrodite. From Sparta, the home of Menelaos and Helen, Paris must have traveled by chariot to his ship at harbor in Gytheion. The companion in front may be Aeneas, who accompanied Paris on his voyage, and the pebbly ground visible here may indicate the seashore.

This vase and its companion piece in Athens are attributed as near in style to the Eretria Painter. About 420–410 B.C. Height 2 inches (5.1 cm). Gift of Alastair B. Martin, 1971 (1971.258.3)



32. The many different schools of vase painting that flourished in Magna Graecia (Southern Italy and Sicily) can be distinguished not only in terms of production, but also, within each group, according to the different artists responsible for the development of the styles. Vases made in Paestum, in southwestern Italy, bear the distinction of being chiefly the work of two painters, Asteas and Python, who have left us their signatures, while the infinitely greater output of Apulia, in the southeast, though readily attributable to distinct artists, has left us no names. The bell krater illustrated here has been ascribed to Asteas, who is thought to have begun the typically Paestan style that is based on vases produced in Sicily. Asteas favors Dionysiac subjects: here the wine god follows a young satyr in a *thiasos*, or revel. Their exuberance is reflected in the gestures of their right arms and in the ecstatic expression of the satyr. The elongated handle palmettes reach all the way up to the rim of the vase and thus form a sturdy frame, as if the scene had been set in a square panel. The reverse shows two youths in conversation – a subject that recurs with little variation on other bell kraters by Asteas.

360–350 B.C. Height 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (37.1 cm). Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.11.3)





33. It is one of the happy conventions of ancient art that the invisible gods can be shown right next to mortals toiling on earth. Here a painter, his hair protected by a workman's cap, applies wax paint to a marble statue of Herakles. To the left an assistant heats the tools in a charcoal brazier. The statue is no longer in the sculptor's studio but has already been put on display in or near a shrine, indicated by the column. The painting of statues in the encaustic technique is known from literary sources, but this is our first—and to date our only—representation of the process. From above, Zeus and a Nike watch; on the extreme right, Herakles himself approaches on tiptoe so as not to disturb the painter. His face and gesture reveal something of the attitude of an art critic at an exhibition.

The picture on the reverse is not related to the main subject on the front but shows one of those quiet groupings of divinities that do not have to tell a story. In the center Athena is seated in a landscape, with her right arm leaning on her shield. She is greeted by a traveler whose identity is indicated by the large star in front of his face: he is one of the Dioscuri. Behind Athena, on higher ground, Pan approaches a seated Hermes, while below them Eros tries to catch a bird. The solitary tree on the right denotes the setting much as the single column on the obverse stands for a shrine or temple.

This vase, a column krater, was made in Apulia before the middle of the fourth century B.C. and has been attributed to the Group of Boston 00.348. Height  $20\frac{3}{32}$  inches (51.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1950 (50.11.4)





34. In the fourth century a type of comedy that burlesqued gods and heroes flourished in Southern Italy and Sicily. The actors in these skits wore padded costumes and grotesque masks and were called phlyakes; the same name was also applied to the plays. Phlyakes are often shown on South Italian vases, mostly painted in the red-figure technique. On not many more than a dozen vases, however, these burlesque actors appear in polychrome painted on the black glaze. The calyx krater in the Museum is a particularly splendid example of this rare class. Here a phlyax masquerades as a reveler with an enormous torch. He wears a skintight sleeved and trousered combination and over it a short padded shirt that does not quite cover his simulated nudity. Over his left arm he has draped an oversize mantle: one has the impression that presently he will trip over it.

The vase has been attributed to the Apulian Konnakis Group, so called after the name of a naked hag that is inscribed on a fragment in Taranto. It is dated in the third quarter of the fourth century B.C. Height 12 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (31.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1951 (51.11.2)

35. The small Sicilian hill town of Centuripe has given its name to a type of polychrome vase found in its ancient necropolis. The technique of painting on these vases has broken radically with tradition: the colors are no longer ceramic, added before the vase was fired, but are in tempera, applied after the vase left the kiln. Most of the subjects on these vases – here we see four women – are taken from the cult of Dionysos, who occurs in some of the scenes. A line can be drawn from the Centuripe subjects to such famous later wall paintings as those in the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii or the Aldobrandini wedding in the Vatican. The fugitive character of the painted decoration rules out the possibility that the vases were ever used; moreover, the lids are not detachable and the decoration is limited to one side. They must therefore have been made exclusively for the tomb, but as we know practically nothing of the cults or mysteries of Sicily, the subjects and their esoteric meaning cannot be interpreted.

A stylistic connection has been established with late red-figure and polychrome vases from the island of Lipari, and this has helped to date the Centuripe ware in the third century B.C., rather than later as had long been held. Height  $14\frac{27}{32}$  inches (37.7 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1953 (53.11.5)



# Index

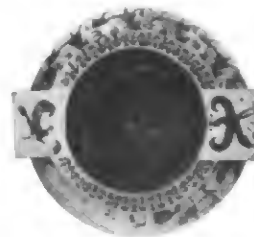
2. Orientalizing Attic neck amphora, 675–650 B.C.



4. Laconian drinking cup attributed to the Rider Painter, about 550–540 B.C.



1. Geometric neck amphora, Attic, about 700 B.C.



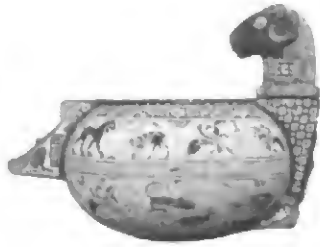
3. Corinthian column krater, 600–575 B.C.



5. Chalcidian neck amphora attributed to the Painter of the Cambridge Hydria, about 540 B.C.



6. Perfume vase,  
East Greek,  
late 7th century B.C.



7. Drinking cup  
attributed to  
the C Painter,  
about 575 B.C.

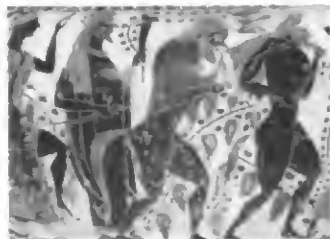
8. Stand signed by  
Kleitias as painter  
and Ergotimos as potter,  
about 570 B.C.



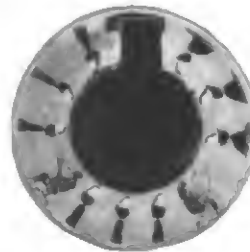
9. Krater attributed  
to Sophilos,  
about 580–570 B.C.



10. Column krater  
attributed to Lydos,  
about 550 B.C.



11. Lekythos attributed  
to the Amasis Painter,  
about 550 B.C.



12. Neck amphora attributed  
to Exekias,  
about 540 B.C.



13. Panathenaic neck amphora  
attributed to the  
Euphiletos Painter,  
about 530 B.C.



14. Boeotian kantharos,  
about 560–550 B.C.



15. Panel amphora attributed to  
the Andokides Painter, signed  
by Andokides as potter,  
about 525 B.C.



16. Kylix attributed to Psiax, about 520 B.C.



18. Psykter attributed to Olto, about 520–510 B.C.



20. Neck amphora attributed to the Kleophrades Painter, about 490–480 B.C.



22. Oinochoe attributed to the Pan Painter, about 480–470 B.C.



24. Kylix attributed to Douris, about 480–470 B.C.



17. Hydria attributed to an artist of the Leagros Group, about 515 B.C.



19. Calyx krater signed by Euphronios as painter and Euxitheos as potter, about 515 B.C.

21. Amphora attributed to the Berlin Painter, about 490 B.C.



23. Kylix attributed to Makron, about 490–480 B.C.



25. Kantharos attributed to the Brygos Painter, about 480 B.C.



26. Kylix attributed to the Briseis Painter, about 480 B.C.



27. Pyxis attributed to the Penthesilea Painter, about 470 B.C.

28. Drinking cup, attributed to the Villa Giulia Painter, about 470–460 B.C.



29. Volute krater attributed to the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, about 470–460 B.C.

30. Lekythos attributed to the Achilles Painter, about 440 B.C.



31. Egg-shaped vase attributed to an artist near the Eretria Painter, about 420–410 B.C.

32. Bell krater attributed to Asteas, 360–350 B.C.



33. Apulian column krater attributed to an artist of the Group of Boston 00.348, early 4th century B.C.

34. Apulian calyx krater attributed to an artist of the Konnakis Group, 350–325 B.C.



35. Centuripe vase, 3rd century B.C.





